

FIRST READING OF THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION BEFORE THE CABINET, SEPTEMBER 20, 1862



Standing. Left to right: SALMON PORTLAND CHASE, *Secretary of the Treasury*. CALEB BLOOD SMITH, *Secretary of the Interior*. MONTGOMERY BLAIR, *Postmaster-General*.
Seated. Left to right: EDWIN MCMASTERS STANTON, *Secretary of War*. ABRAHAM LINCOLN, *President of the United States*. GIDEON WELLES, *Secretary of the Navy*. WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD, *Secretary of State*.
EDWARD BATES, *Attorney-General*

The above picture was painted by F. B. Carpenter, in the State Dining Room of the White House, between February 5 and August 1, 1864, under the eye and with the kindly help of President Lincoln. The original is in the Capitol at Washington.

Mr. Lincoln, before reading the manuscript of the proclamation, said in substance, "I have considered everything that has been said to me about the expediency of emancipation, and have made up my mind to issue this proclamation, and I have invited you to come together, not to discuss what is to be done, but to have you hear what I have written, and to get your suggestions about form and style," adding, "I have thought it all over and have made a promise that it should be done to myself, and to God."

Secretary Salmon Portland Chase says, "The picture well represents that moment which followed the reading of the proclamation."

The artist expresses himself thus: "It was a scene second only in historical importance and interest to that of the Declaration of Independence."

Upon its completion the painting was exhibited for two days in the East Room of the White House.

After having been exhibited through the country the picture was purchased by Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, of New York, and presented to the Re-United States, both Houses of Congress unanimously accepting the gift, and voting Mrs. Thompson the "Thanks of Congress," the highest honor ever paid a woman in our country. It was accepted on Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, 1878. Mr. Garfield, then a member of Congress, made the speech of presentation on behalf of Mrs. Thompson. Hon. Alexander Stephens, former Vice-President of the Confederacy, who, in a famous speech at the beginning of the war, had declared, "Slavery is the corner-stone of the new confederacy," made the speech accepting it on behalf of Congress.